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Campaign Issue Blunted

By MARY McGRATH

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The 1962 campaign will go on without its number one personality and with its number one issue blunted.

President Kennedy took Cuba out of the campaign with his speech about the ~~city~~ and forceful measures he has instituted against the Red Menace in the Caribbean.

Afterward, Press Secretary Pierre Salinger told reporters that the President, ~~needed~~ here to deal with the crisis would appear no more on the air this year.

Republicans who have been howling for action have been separated from their most inflammatory talking point. Cuba is the principal preoccupation of voters from coast to coast.

Although the President refusing to use their word "blockade," substituted "quarantine," the effect is the same.

The impulse to say "I told you so" may arise. It may be resisted. Before he went on the

air in his oval study, the President conferred with the Republican leader, former President Eisenhower, as well as with former Presidents Hoover and Truman.

As for the Democrats, they are robbed of their most glamorous campaign speaker.

But there is the comfort that he has fulfilled their almost desperate reassurances to voters that the President would do something about the Cuban situation before the election.

For congressional leaders engaged in re-election contests, the occasion provided evidence to their constituents of their importance to White House councils. They were not only summoned by the President, but sent for in military aircraft.

Among them were Senate Minority Leader Dirksen, for whose defeat the President pleaded in Illinois last week end, and Senator Wiley, Republican of Wisconsin, who was on the President's list for future week-end attention.

Senator Kuchel of California, the minority whip, who arrived late, told of being picked up in a jet fighter on his way to a rally.

Presumably the most immediate political beneficiary of the

President's voluntary removal from the partisan platform is his 1960 rival, former Vice President Richard M. Nixon, candidate for Governor in California. ~~the State the President covets most in this election.~~

Mr. Kennedy's visit to the Golden State this week end was to have been the climax of the struggle of the incumbent Democratic Gov. Edmund G. (Pat) Brown. Mr. Kennedy was being counted on to rally apathetic Democrats and to coax them to the polls in behalf of the hard-pressed Gov. Brown, who is running neck and neck with Mr. Nixon.

Another political consequence of last night's action is to render almost totally unintelligible the candidacy of James B. Donovan, the New York lawyer who came into the Senate race against incumbent Republican Jacob K. Javits because of his negotiations with Fidel Castro for the release of Cuban prisoners.

All bargaining sessions, now that search and seizure of Cuba-bound vessels are in effect, are indefinitely over.

The Only Course

The President came into his office last night with the air of a man who has weighed all possibilities and come down on the only possible course.

His attitude was resigned, not grim. His message to Soviet Premier Khrushchey was plain: If this is the way you want it, here it is. His voice was steady throughout.

When he said of a protestation of Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko, "This statement also was false," his tone was hard and dry.

He did not ask for national unity. He knew it was not necessary.

All of the candidates clamoring for his services have been telling him that people wanted to know one thing more than any other: "What about Cuba?"

Now they know, and for him the campaign is over.

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